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ABSTRACT

This case study in policy research was prompted by: (1) concern about a methodological issue: how useful are cross-sectional, non-experimental data for answering policy questions?--and, (2) interest in some policy issues raised by the school decentralization/community control controversies and participatory reforms of the 1960s--are participatory reforms feasible--i.e. are they likely to raise participation and satisfaction levels in low SES, non-white communities? In 1970 and 1971, the Center for Urban Education (CUE) conducted an extensive survey of a sample of New York City schools and school neighborhoods. A portion of the CUE data is directly relevant to the substantive and methodological questions raised here. Of the 48 public elementary schools in the sample used in this study, 22 had student populations that were 70 percent or more black, 26 had student populations that were 70 percent or more white. Within each racial grouping, the sample selection procedures were designed to insure inclusion of schools reflecting the full range of existing variability in community SES. Once the sample was selected, data about these schools were gathered from school system records, interviews with personnel in each school, Parent Association presidents and a sample of mothers whose children attended each of these schools. (Author/JM)

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SCHOOL OPENNESS, PARENT PARTICIPATION, AND SATISFACTION: AN EXPLORATION OF CAUSAL MODELS*

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This case study in policy research was prompted by: (1) concern about a methodological issue -- how useful are cross-sectional, nonexperimental data for answering policy questions? -- and (2) interest in some policy issues raised by the school decentralization/community control controversies and participatory reforms of the 1960s -- are participatory reforms feasible -- i.e., are they likely to raise participation levels in low-SES, nonwhite communities? can they make institutions such as schools more satisfying to their clients?

The 60s had witnessed an upsurge of participatory reforms in a climate that took for granted a large body of untested assumptions about how social change could be achieved. Although the passing years have seen the demise of the heated decentralization/community control controversies in which the participation issue was framed in the educational arena, the underlying assumptions about participation, its causes and effects, predated these controversies and continue on in other forms. Therefore, a test of these assumptions seemed to be a matter of some significance.

The research reported here examined a subset of these assumptions. The findings suggest that these assumptions are of questionable validity -- at least when applied to the target population of policy concern. However, before hasty implications are drawn from these findings, the policymaker must consider a number of serious methodological problems inherent in trying to use nonexperimental data for policy guidance. These issues are considered, and an attempt is made to arrive at some balanced judgments on both the substantive and methodological questions that structured the study.

ASSUMPTIONS TO BE TESTED

Throughout the years of controversy over decentralization and community control, one rallying cry was heard repeatedly -- "What's good for Scarsdale is good for Harlem," or Bedford-Stuyvesant, or Ocean Hill-Brownsville.[1] The target population of concern in decentralization and community control, as in most of the reform strategies debated in the 60s, were residents of nonwhite, low-income, inner-city communities. However, the argument for these approaches was premised on assumptions about what conditions were like in somewhat different communities -- white, middle-class and affluent, suburbs. The reasoning was by analogy from assumptions about "the way things are" in the Scarsdales of the nation to notions of the way things might be in the Harlems.[2]

The analogical argument assumed the existence of high participation levels in white, middle-income suburbs and posited this participation as a causal force producing such desired effects as school system responsiveness, school system effectiveness, and citizen satisfaction. And, fraught with even more policy implications, the analogical argument assumed that high participation levels in suburbs were a consequence of certain political/administrative/institutional conditions -- particularly small size of governmental units, community control, and institutional arrangements and norms that encouraged participation. The assumed causal chain can be summarized as follows: situational variables ——→ participation ——→ responsiveness, effectiveness, and satisfaction.

Of citical significance to this analogical argument were assumptions about which of the correlates of participation were to be assigned causal status (SES or situational factors) and the extent to which participatory behaviors would be responsive to alterations in situational variables. Advocates of participatory reforms explained the consistent finding of a relation-

ship between participation levels and community SES as spurious -- community SES happened to covary with these situational variables and it was these situational variables rather than the traits associated with SES that were truly causal. Participation in suburbs was high because these communities were characterized by conditions that stimulated participation. If these favorable political/administrative/institutional conditions were established in inner-city communities, then the generally lo participation levels of inner-city areas would rise toward suburban levels. Or at least so the argument ran.

The implications of these assumptions were far-reaching. If high participation levels were tied inevitably to such background variables as SES, this would suggest the futility of attempts to implement intervention strategies aimed at stimulating participation in low-SES communities without affecting SES itself. However, if in accord with the analogical argument, participation levels were responsive to situational variables and these (in contrast to SES) were readily alterable by governmental intervention, then this would suggest the advisability of at least experimenting with participation-oriented change strategies.

There is a sizeable literature on these various assumptions, in the literature of the social sciences and the applied fields of education and evaluation of social action programs. Our review of this literature[3] suggested several points that were useful in focusing our research on one subset of these assumptions. Participation levels in suburbs are considerably higher than in the inner city. However, it is by no means clear that these participation differentials are explained by differences in readily alterable policy variables as opposed to harder-to-change population characteristics such as SES.

Of the various situational variables the analogical argument assumed as

determinants of high suburban participation levels, we eliminated community size and degree of community control from the scope of our investigation. Once population characteristics such as SES are controlled, the differences in participation rates in communities of different size tend to virtually disappear. Existing evidence on degree of community control is inadequate to arrive at any firm judgments on the impact of this situational variable, but what relevant data are available are not very persuasive.

We therefore focused our attention on a third set of situational variables, school provision of opportunities for participation. Available data on this variable seemed more supportive of the analogical argument, but even here the implications were unclear. Some studies suggested that school provision of more opportunities for participation may in fact stimulate greater parent participation. But what of the argument that this greater participation would in turn produce higher levels of school effectiveness, school system responsiveness, and citizen satisfaction with the schools?

The evidence provides few grounds for optimism that parent participation levels significantly affect school effectiveness (defined here in terms of academic achievement levels). Once parents' background characteristics are taken into account by statistical controls, whatever relationships have been uncovered between parent participation and achievement tend to disappear. Less conclusive findings are available on the relationship between parent participation and school system responsiveness, but the whole area of research on institutional responsiveness is too poorly developed to provide any sound basis for policy guidance. The evidence relating parent participation and satisfaction with the schools seemed to provide a stronger base for a research payoff in concrete policy recommendations.

Research findings suggest that participation can potentially affect citizen

satisfaction with the schools, and that the relationship between participation and satisfaction generally remains significant even after background characteristics such as SES are controlled. Unclear, however, are both the direction and the magnitude of the potential effect of participation on satisfaction.

Some studies suggest that increasing parent participation in school affairs in low-income neighborhoods may lead to increased satisfaction. Other studies indicate the reverse: under some circumstances increased parent participation may lead to greater dissatisfaction. The different results appear traceable to the conditions under which participation is increased and the kinds of information parents are exposed to in the course of their participation in school affairs. Under favorable conditions, the result is greater satisfaction; under unfavorable conditions, greater dissatisfaction. But whether the direction of the effect is to increase satisfaction or dissatisfaction, it is unclear whether the magnitude of the effect is sufficient to have any policy significance -- i.e., whether it is sufficient to warrant a major investment in this approach to school reform.

Of all the potential research questions suggested by the analogical argument, then, those that seemed to promise a policy-relevant yield were the following: will increasing the school-provided opportunities for participation in inner-city communities (and the norms encouraging such participation) stimulate significantly higher levels of parent participation? And will greater participation, in turn, produce significantly higher levels of satisfaction?

Available data were inadequate to answer these questions. Ideally, we felt, the information needed should have been gathered from a policy experiment in which the school-provided opportunities for participation and supportive norms were varied, relevant background variables and other situational variables such as school district size and degree of community control were controlled, and

measurements were made of such outcomes as participation levels and parent satisfaction. Such policy experiments, however, can be quite costly and time-consuming, and we were not in a position to structure the conditions needed for a policy experiment.

An alternative approach seemed worth pursuing, using survey research techniques. We hoped that the natural range of variability in the school-provided-opportunities and norms variables could be used to approximate different levels of these "treatments" that might have been tried in a policy experiment. We were aware of some of the limitations of naturalistic data that might weaken their utility for policy guidance: the naturally occurring range of variability might not be as great as the range one would have established in a planned experiment; the types of school-provided-opportunities occurring naturally might not be the types one would have created in an experiment; and those school-provided-opportunities existing at present might not be completely appropriate for generalizing to the kinds of policy conclusions of interest. Given all these limitations, can nonexperimental data of the kind gathered in survey research be useful for policy guidance?

In 1970 and 1971, the Center for Urban Education (CUE) conducted an extensive survey of a sample of New York City schools and school neighborhoods.[4] A portion of the CUE data is directly relevant to the substantive and methodological questions raised here.

The policy-relevant questions of interest to us were rephrased in a manner that permitted analysis with these data: To what extent are variability in school-provided opportunities for participation (what we will refer to as <u>school openness arrangements</u>) and a school climate supportive of such participation (what we will call <u>openness climate</u>) related to parent participation in school affairs? To what extent are the variability in school openness arrangements,

openness climate, and participation related to parental satisfaction with the schools? How salient are openness arrangements, openness climate, and participation in explaining satisfaction, relative to such other factors as school inputs (e.g., class size, overcrowding, per pupil expenditures, teacher experience levels) and school outputs (i.e., academic achievement)?

Of methodological interest were the following questions: How much confidence can we have in findings drawn from nonexperimental data about "the way things are" for guiding policy decisions about how things might be under somewhat different future conditions? For what kinds of policy questions can nonexperimental data be most useful? For what kinds would they seem least useful? What approaches to analyzing nonexperimental data appear to be most helpful for providing answers to these questions?

DESIGN AND SAMPLE SELECTION

The analyses reported here use only a small portion of the CUE data and most but not all of the CUE sample.[5] The 48-school sample we shall consider is stratified by race and community SES. Of the 48 New York City public elementary schools in this sample, 22 had student populations that were predominantly (70 percent or more) black, 26 had student populations that were predominantly (70 percent or more) white (more technically, Caucasian and non-Hispanic. Within each racial grouping, the sample selection procedures were designed to insure inclusion of schools reflecting the full range of existing variability in community SES.

The analogical argument is based on thinking that compares suburbs and inner-city communities. However, our study design called for sample selection by race and community SES rather than by suburban/inner-city community type since our review of the relevant literature suggested that the suburban/inner-city dimension was simply a proxy for such population background characteristics.

The design, therefore, called for selection of school neighborhoods within a single city (New York) in accord with the following sampling frame:

	Black	White
SES 1		
SES 2		
SES 3		
SES 4		

Once the sample of schools was selected, data about these schools were gathered from school system records, from interviews with personnel in each school (the principal, an assistant principal, a guidance counselor, the teachers' union chapter chairman, and an aide), Parent Association presidents, and a sample of mothers whose children attended each of these schools.

Random block quota sampling procedures were used to select a sample of 15 mothers for each of the schools in our sample. Our eligibility criteria for respondents required that they (1) be mothers or female mother-substitutes; (2) have at least one child attending a grade from 1 through 6 in the specified school; and (3) be of the school's dominant racial group (i.e., only Black mothers were interviewed in schools categorized as predominantly black; only Caucasian, non-Hispanic mothers were interviewed in schools categorized as predominantly white). The responses of individual mothers were aggregated by school to provide school scores. Throughout our discussion, schools rather than individuals are the units of analysis.[6]

The setting of this study in time and place should be borne in mind, for it affects the degree of generalizability the reader may be willing to grant the findings. Depending on one's point of view and the particular research questions of interest, New York City may be considered either unique or a hothouse of

developments that will in some form or other, and to some degree, affect all large urban areas, and some small ones as well.

To complicate matters further, New York City in 1970 and 1971 may have been unlike even New York City in any time before or since. The timing of the study followed by only a year or so the emotional furor over community control as this issue erupted in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversies. And too, the research was conducted at the time the city system was undergoing a gradual transition to decentralization in accord with legislation that had just been passed. Parents were interviewed, for instance, within only months after most of the city had held the first local school board elections, and in some parts of the city the elections were held during the period of our field interviewing.

The CUE research team was aware of the potential bias inherent in this research setting. However, it was decided that the setting was particularly useful for the questions of interest to us, and that these points far outweighed the problems posed by the setting's possible uniqueness in time and place. Our reasoning was as follows: We were exploring the substantive questions with naturalistic rather than experimental data. If a policy experiment had been created to test the questions of interest, one could reasonably expect the variables at the core of the experiment to be of greater salience to the participants than these variables would be in naturally-occurring settings. Similarly, if a policy experiment had such positive results that it was followed by implementation of the policy in new settings, one could expect, reasonably, that these variables, changed by the new policy, would be particularly salient to those affected, e.g., community residents. Therefore, drawing naturalistic data from a setting where circumstances in fact should have made these variables particularly salient simulates as much as possible the salience of these variables

to be expected if we had established a policy experiment or had actually recently implemented the policy reform.

If this reasoning is valid, then this research setting provides an excellent opportunity for assessing the potential utility of nonexperimental data for policy guidance. For if these variables are found to make little difference in a setting where there has been so much attention to them, there would seem to be little likelihood of their having a significant impact in other settings where the proposed reforms might be implemented. The research setting, then, provides a particularly good opportunity for a test of disconfirmation: if the hypothesized relationships are not confirmed with these data, then there would seem to be little reason to expect to find them confirmed elsewhere.

VARIABLES AND MEASURES

Three sets of data were gathered on each of the sample schools. Parent interviews were conducted to provide data on parent participation levels, perceptions of school openness, satisfaction with the school, and family background. Parent Association (PA) presidents and school personnel employed in each of these achools (the principal, an assistant principal, a guidance counselor, the teachers' union chapter chairman, and a school aide) were interviewed to provide information on school openness arrangements and openness climate. And, finally, data on school system inputs and outputs for each of the schools were gathered from official school system records and from research sources derived from these records.

Data from Parent Interviews

The mothers interviewed provided an extensive amount of family background information for our analysis. The background variables we measured were selected because we assumed they might be related in various ways to the outcome measures of interest to us, i.e., participation and satisfaction. A total of 20 background

measures were calculated for each school:

- mean family income
- mean mothers' educational attainment
- mean fathers' educational attainment
- mean score on adaptation of Hollingshead two-factor index of social position (a composite score weighting the educational attainment and occupational status of the head of the household)
- percentage receiving welfare assistance
- percentage of female-headed households
- percentage of working mothers
- percentage of mothers who grew up in the US South (used for the black sample)
- percentage of mothers who grew up in the US outside the South
- percentage of mothers who grew up in the Caribbean (used for the black sample)
- percentage of mothers who grew up outside the US or the Caribbean (used for the white sample)
- size of localities where mothers spent first 18 years of life
- percentage Protestant
- percentage Catholic
- percentage Jewish (used for the white sample)
- percentage of mothers with Western European origins (white sample)
- percentage of mothers with Irish Catholic origins (white sample)
- percentage of mothers with Southern or Eastern European origins (white sample)
- percentage of mothers with Italian Catholic origins (white sample)
- mean sociopolitical activism (a measure of mothers' general activism in community affairs, i.s., how active they were in politics, in political, community, and/or action organizations, and in taking action to express unhappiness over some public issue(s))

Two separate parent participation indices were developed to measure two conceptually different forms of participation:

P_1 = a relatively passive form of involvement that is concerned largely with one's own child. The index is made up of scores on three items: frequency of visits to see the child's teacher or the principal; frequency of visits to the school to attend a group meeting, class, or program; and whether or not the mother attended Open School Week.

P_2 = a more active kind of involvement that is directed at schoolwide matters, and would tend to focus on issues broader in scope than the individual-child-centered concerns of P_1. This index is made up of scores on nine items: whether or not the mother voted in the recent community school board elections; whether or not in response to strong feelings about a school issue in the previous three years the mother had attended a rally, signed a petition, collected signatures on a petition, been part of a group that discussed a complaint or a problem with a principal, or partici-

pated in a group demonstration at a school; whether or not the mother belonged to a school parent association or some other organization concerned mainly with education, or had been an officer or served on any committees in any of these organizations; and frequency of attending meetings of these organizations.

Twelve items in the mothers' interview schedule provided data on their perceptions of the school's openness to parent access and influence. The items covered four dimensions of what we conceptualized as perceived openness:

perceived access = the availability of school personnel for simple contact and interaction (judgments of the ease or difficulty a parent would have if she wanted to see, on the one hand, the school's principal and, on the other hand, her child's teacher; judgments of the ease or difficulty a community leader would have if he/she wanted to see the principal; and a rating of how good the school was in providing adequate contact between parents and school personnel)

perceived information = adequate flow of information from school to home (degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement that the principal and teachers work hard to try to keep parents and community leaders informed about what is going on in the school)

perceived influence = the openness of school personnel to having their decisions or actions swayed by parents' influence attempts (a judgment of how much influence parents have on important decisions made by the principal; how much influence parents should have on these decisions, used in combination with the previous item as a discrepancy score, how much influence parents should have minus how much influence they do have; a judgment of whether parents and community residents have too much, too little, or the right amount of influence on the school; how successful the mother thinks she could be in getting the principal to change a harmful or unjust decision; and to what extent she thinks the principal would reconsider a decision if a group of parents complained about it)

perceived interest representation = either school personnel themselves or the school's PA officers represent the parents' interests (how strongly the mother agreed or disagreed with a statement that the principal and teachers usually foresee the children's needs and problems so that parents don't have to complain; and how well she thought the school's PA officers expressed her views)

One of the key measures in the mothers' interview was our index of satisfaction with school quality. This index was designed to tap mothers' satisfaction with the effectiveness of the job being done by the local school in pro-

viding a good education.

satisfaction with school quality = a composite index of seven items (mothers' ratings of the local school, its teachers in general and her child's teacher in particular, the teaching of reading in the school, school discipline, and how good a job the principal was doing; and a judgment of how the school compared with most other schools in the community -- better, worse, or about the same)

Two other measures are less critical to the analysis than those considered above, but they do enter the analysis at some points and therefore warrant some description.

desire-for-alternatives index = how many alternatives a mother would prefer to the local school her child was attending (some other school, another public school, a parochial school, and/or a private school) and how unhappy she would be if her child could no longer attend the particular local public school he/she was then attending

desired-say index = how much influence parents should have on the principal of the local school; how strongly the mothers agreed or disagreed with the statement that parents should not try to run the schools; and how strongly the mothers agreed or disagreed that parents should have a say in each of the following areas of school decision-making: deciding what is taught, hiring teachers, removing teachers, allocating school district funds, choosing textbooks and other learning materials, hiring and removing principals, and setting educational goals.

Data from Interviews with School Personnel and PA Presidents

Our primary reason for gathering data on parent attitudes and behaviors was to determine the extent to which they were attributable to things that schools actually did -- policy and practices that represent alterable policy options. We collected data about what schools actually did to encourage parent participation and to provide a climate supportive of such participation by interviewing PA presidents, principals, assistant principals, guidance counselors, teachers' union chapter chairmen, and school aides in the sample schools.Four measures derived from these interviews were used in various parts of our analysis -- school scores on school openness, openness climate, racial congruence, and community antagonism toward the school.

school openness = how much of an effort school personnel put into various channels for interaction with parents and community residents (analogous to the access and information dimensions of perceived openness) and how substantive a role they provide for the PA in school decision-making (analogous to the influence and interest representation dimensions of perceived openness). The openness score is a composite of information about two dimensions of openness: outreach from school to community, and the role of the PA as a mediating agency for parents. The outreach subscore was calculated from raw data about the following: the extent of school use of paraprofessionals and aides for home visits; the proportion of school personnel belonging to and/or attending meetings of the school PA/PTA, and the frequency of attending PA/PTA meetings; the proportions of paraprofessionals or aides active in community organizations; the frequency of school professionals attending community organization meetings; the extent of teachers' union effort to "build bridges to the community" after the 1968 teachers' strikes; the extent of outreach to get the community into the school (i.e., provision of a parents' room, encouragement of school visiting, and provision for community use of school facilities); and the extent of joint school-community action on community problems. The PA-as-mediating-agency subscore was calculated from information about the following: ratings of PA activism; the number of PA meetings per year; the frequency of contacts between the principal and PA officers; whether or not the PA had a role in planning Open School Week activities; and the scope of issues discussed in PA meetings and in meetings between the principal and PA officers (i.e., the extent to which what was discussed indicated that the PA functioned in a clear advisory role on policy, as a purely informational channel or supportive arm, or somewhere in between these two poles).

openness climate = what school personnel defined as the appropriate degree of school openness, especially the appropriate degree of parent or community influence on school policies (to what extent school personnel believed that parents or the PA should play a significant role in decisions about hiring teachers, hiring administrators, and selecting textbooks and other learning materials; the scope of school decisions that school personnel felt should involve professionals only; the principal's attitude toward the role the school should play in solving community problems; and the principal's attitudes on questions of to whom and on what he should be held accountable)

racial congruence = the proportion of the school's professional staff that is racially congruent with the school's student body, scored for the black schools only. It is an additive measure that assigns points for the proportion of the school's professional staff that is black, and additional points for having black representation in the administrative and guidance staffs.

community supportiveness/antagomism toward the school = ratings on how supportive or antagonistic the PA and community in general are toward the school; data about the relationships between school and community during the 1968 teachers' strikes; the extent to which the school had been confronted with any community attempts to secure the removal of

any among the various hierarchical levels of school personnel; and the extent to which parents and/or community residents had engaged in any overt action in support of school personnel, notably in an effort to reverse serious budget cuts.

Data from School System Records

For each of the schools in our sample, data were gathered on the following school system inputs:

enrollment size
class size
utilization rate (a measure of excess space or overcrowding)
per pupil expenditures
age of physical facilities
percentage of teachers with more than three years of teaching experience

Reading and arithmetic achievement data on each school were copied from school system records and calculated into a number of different measures:

reading achievement/cross-sectional score = a measure of the average reading achievement of students in grades 2 through 5 in a given school, as indicated by mean grade scores on standardized reading achievement tests

reading achievement/gain score = a measure of how much students in a school on the average gain in reading achievement over the three year period between grades 2 and 5

reading achievement/percentage reading at/above grade level = percentage of students in the total school population reading at or above the grade level norm

reading achievement/school effectiveness score = a measure of reading achievement designed to correct for both different starting points (e.g., different grade 2 scores) and the different rates of gain associated with these different starting points, calculated by using the residuals of regression equations predicting the expected grade 5 score from the school's mean grade 2 score

arithmetic achievement/cross-sectional score = a measure of the average arithmetic achievement of students in our sample schools in grade 4 (the only grade for which citywide data were available)

DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

Given the inherent weaknesses of nonexperimental data for policy guidance, we opted for a somewhat cautious and conservative approach to the analysis of

our data. In examining the data on each of the two policy outcomes of concern to us (participation and satisfaction), we considered a range of alternative plausible explanations or "partial causal models." And too, where multiple indicators were available for analysis on a given question, we considered the data on all these measures, not just one or two. We were therefore able to check and recheck our interpretations against various indicators from the vantage point of a number of alternative plausible explanations. This approach was undertaken in the expectation that it would permit increased confidence in our findings and in their utility for policy guidance.

THE FINDINGS ON PARTICIPATION

Proponents of the analogical argument assume that participation levels are largely a response to opportunities for participation (i.e., openness) and a normative climate supportive of participation (i.e., openness climate). If the argument is valid, then what schools do to encourage participation is a matter of great consequence, and variability in school openness policies and practices should account for a significant amount of the variability in participation.

However, other explanations of school participation also seem plausible. Perhaps it is not so much what schools actually do to encourage participation that matters so much as what parents think schools do. If this second explanation is correct, then perceived openness may be significantly more critical than actual openness in accounting for variability in participation levels.

A third possible explanation traces the roots of participatory behavior to dissatisfaction with school functioning. This explanation is premised on two beliefs: first, that people are generally satisfied with (or at least neutral with regard to) institutions like schools that impinge on their lives; and second, that participation in the functioning of these institutions is generally a low priority concern that becomes significant only when institutional performance is

unsatisfactory. According to this view, the public is generally content to let the personnel who run these institutions proceed without interference, but holds in reserve an implicit veto --i.e., the power to register complaints. The public registers complaints in the expectation that the problems will be remedied and that this will make possible a return to the more typical pattern of nonparticipation.

If this view is correct, then what matters most in accounting for variability in schoo participation levels is parental dissatisfaction with school functioning and the aspects of school functioning that are the sources of dissatisfaction. Unless the quantity or quality of school-community interaction is a source of significant dissatisfaction, then openness, openness climate, and perceived openness should all be irrelevant to any explanation of variability in school participation levels.

A fourth plausible explanation turns the participation-dissatisfaction relationship on its head: it assumes that the roots of participatory behavior are to be found not in dissatisfaction but in the opposite -- i.e., in satisfaction with a system and attachment to the system as then functioning. This view is premised on the belief that people are willing to invest time and energy in participation only when they have developed some attachment to the system and identify with it as a system functioning to a satisfactory degree in their interests.

If this explanation is valid, then variability in school participation levels may be explainable largely in terms of parents' satisfaction with the schools and aspects of school functioning that are the sources of that satisfaction. Here too, unless the quantity or quality of school-community interaction is a significant source of, in this case, satisfaction, then school openness, openness climate, and perceived openness are all irrelevant to explaining variability in school participation rates.

Of course, all these explanations may be incorrect, and the true explanation of participation differentials may be found in the background characteristics of parents. If this fifth and final explanation that we will be considering is valid, then those things that schools do must be judged of little consequence for affecting parent participation levels. And too, parents' perceptions of what schools do, and parents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the schools, may be equally inconsequential in themselves, if they can be demonstrated to be explainable largely in terms of parents' backgrounds. If participation is a learned behavior acquired as part of differential socialization experiences -- the psychological dimension of such background variables as SES, religion, regional or national origins, and the like -- then efforts to increase participation by altering situational variables such as school openness would seem doomed to failure.

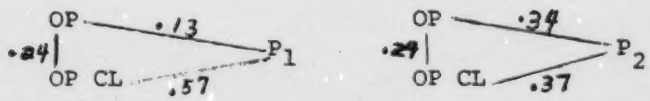
The New York City data permitted us to examine how well each of these models help to explain differences in participatory behavior among schools in a single school system. The reader interested in details of the data analysis and obtained statistics is referred to the full report of this study.[7] The key findings are summarized in the pages that follow.

Model 1: Participation (P) as a Response to Openness (OP) and Openness Climate (OP CL)

If model 1, the model suggested by the analogical argument, is valid, then openness and openness climate should be strongly related to participation and should account for a significant amount of the variability in participation. And too, the strength of the relationships should not be significantly affected by controlling other variables. The sketches below depict the relevant zero-order correlations for the black and the white samples.

BLACK SAMPLE

WHITE SAMPLE



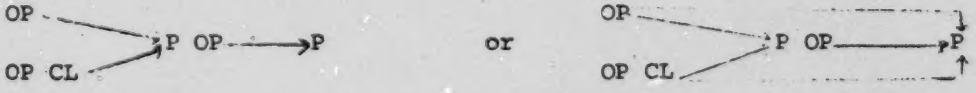
The model would seem to fit the data for the white sample only. For the black sample, there is virtually no correlation for any of the hypothesized relationships and little was changed by controlling on such variables as SES. The correlations for the white sample indicate that openness and openness climate are related to participation, as hypothesized.

Since openness and openness climate share some variance, standardized regression equations were calculated to estimate the unique contributions of each to an explanation of variability in participation. In equations for P_1 and P_2 as dependent variables, school openness arrangements failed to achieve statistical significance, but openness climate was demonstrated to be a factor of some importance in explaining participation levels in white schools, especially participation of the P_1 variety. (Openness climate alone explained 32% of the variability in P_1 and was highly significant, F=11.5. For P_2, the results were weaker and just short of statistical significance: 14% of the variability in P_2, F=3.9).

Other aspects of the data analysis indicated that there is one thing that black schools do that can be considered akin to openness that does seem to matter to some degree. Racial congruence is moderately related to both P_1 (r=.32) and P_2 (r=.22). However, it seems unwise to make too much of this point. At most, racial congruence explains 4 to 10% of the variability in the two participation measures.

Model 2: Participation as a Response to Perceived Openness (P OP)

Our interest in perceived openness was primarily as a mediating variable between what schools do, in the form of openness arrangements and openness climate, and parents' participatory behaviors as a response, as sketched below:



If model 2 is valid, then measures of perceived openness should be strongly related to participation and should account for a substantial amount of the variability in participation. The strengths of the relationships should remain unaffected by introducing controls on other variables.

The relevant zero-order correlations for the black and the white samples are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Clearly, the data do not fit the assumptions of this model. Few of the correlations are even moderately strong, even fewer are positive, and none are statistically significant. The large number of negative correlations, especially in the black data, suggest that,contrary to the analogical argument and its variants, participation is higher in schools that are perceived to be less open to parent access and influence. We shall return to this point later in our discussion.

Models 3 and 4: Participation as a Response to Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction

To explore these models, we used a number of indicators of satisfaction/dissatisfaction and other attitudinal variables we thought might be akin in various complex ways to satisfaction/dissatisfaction. The variables examined were: satisfaction with the local school (the satisfaction with school quality index); community supportiveness/antagonism toward the school; desire for alternatives to the local school; and parental desires for more active roles in school decisionmaking.

The relevant zero-order correlations are reported in Tables 3 and 4. The signs of some of the correlations suggest that participation is related to satisfaction; the signs of the others suggest the reverse, that it is related to dissatisfaction. Almost none of the correlations are statistically significant, and even the strongest findings explain only a small amount of the variability in participation.

If participation were rooted in dissatisfaction, we might expect it to be

TABLE 1

CORRELATIONS: PERCEIVED OPENNESS WITH PARTICIPATION MEASURES, OPENNESS, OPENNESS CLIMATE, AND RACIAL CONGRUENCE
BLACK SAMPLE (N=22)[a]

P_1 = participation with regard to own child
P_2 = participation on schoolwide matters

	r with P_1	r with P_2	r with Openness[a]	r with Openness Climate[a]	r with Racial Congruence[a]
1. Perceived openness	-.32	-.07	-.11	-.03	.23
2. Perceived access:					
a) Parent can see principal	-.13	-.07	-.03	-.39	.01
b) Parent can see teacher	-.04	-.25	-.16	.15	.14
c) Community leader can see principal	-.14	-.07	-.38	.00	-.08
d) Good amount of parent contact with the school	-.32	-.34	.17	.01	-.07
3. Perceived information:					
Principal and teachers try to keep parents and community informed	-.37	-.14	.41	.21	.31
4. Perceived influence:					
a) Principal would rethink decision (if parents complained about something)	-.40	.04	-.31	-.32	.17
b) Parent expects to be successful in getting principal to change harmful/unjust decision	-.16	-.02	-.28	-.18	-.17
c) Too much community influence on the school	.25	.14	.06	.05	.29
d) Parents have influence on the school	.27	-.03	-.24	-.18	.06
e) Parents should have less influence than they do have on the school	-.41	.06	-.39	-.36	-.58**
5. Perceived interest representation:					
a) Parents and teachers try to foresee problems so that complaints are unnecessary	-.10	.18	-.05	.15	.26
b) PA officers adequately express her views	-.14	-.05	-.07	-.11	.03

[a]On openness, openness climate, and racial congruence, N=21.

**Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .01.

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TABLE 2

CORRELATIONS: PERCEIVED OPENNESS WITH PARTICIPATION MEASURES, OPENNESS, AND OPENNESS CLIMATE
WHITE SAMPLE (N=26)

P_1 = participation with regard to own child

P_2 = participation on schoolwide matters

	r with P_1	r with P_2	r with Openness	r with Openness Climate
1. Perceived openness	.10	.03	.13	.15
2. Perceived access:				
a) Parent can see principal	-.13	.04	.19	-.14
b) Parent can see teacher	.14	.23	.18	.01
c) Community leader can see principal	.09	.13	.09	.19
d) Good amount of parent contact with the school	.02	-.21	.14	.31
3. Perceived information: Principal and teachers try to keep parents and community informed	.13	-.08	-.10	.23
4. Perceived influence:				
a) Principal would rethink decision (if parents complained about something)	.13	.06	.05	.28
b) Parent expects to be successful in getting principal to change harmful/ unjust decision	-.14	-.11	.30	.10
c) Too much community influence on the school	.14	-.13	-.10	.25
d) Parents have influence on the school	.37	.28	.31	.38
e) Parents should have less influence than they do on the school	-.02	-.20	-.34	-.25
5. Perceived interest representation:				
a) Parents and teachers try to foresee problems so that complaints are unnecessary	-.02	-.26	.08	.01
b) PA officers adequately express her views	.12	.13	.35	.28

TABLE 3

CORRELATIONS: PARTICIPATION MEASURES WITH SATISFACTION, DESIRE FOR ALTERNATIVES, DESIRE FOR SAY
BLACK SAMPLE (N=22)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Satisfaction with the school	-	-.32	-.48*	.20	.15	-.35
2. Desire for alternatives to the local school		-	-.24	.15	.24	-.02
3. Desire say in school decisionmaking			-	-.42*	-.04	.11
4. Participation with regard to own child				-	.52*	-.07
5. Participation on schoolwide matters					-	-.23
6. Community antagonism						-

TABLE 4

CORRELATIONS: PARTICIPATION MEASURES WITH SATISFACTION, DESIRE FOR ALTERNATIVES, DESIRE FOR SAY
WHITE SAMPLE (N=26)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Satisfaction with the school	-	-.38	.12	-.01	-.10	-.30
2. Desire for alternatives to the local school		-	-.07	-.36	-.16	-.07
3. Desire say in school decisionmaking			-	.43*	.30	.32
4. Participation with regard to own child				-	.65**	.23
5. Participation on schoolwide matters					-	.22
6. Community antagonism						-

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.
**Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .01.

higher in schools where (1) conditions exist that might be expected to be causes of dissatisfaction, and where (2) these conditions do in fact seem to be related to parental dissatisfaction. If the reverse were true and participation was tied to satisfaction, we would expect to find participation higher in schools where (1) there are favorable conditions, and where (2) these conditions seem to be related to parental satisfaction.

Tables 5 and 6 list a number of school inputs and outputs that might be expected to be sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction to parents, depending on whether the school their child attends is high or low on the specified condition. (For instance, high achievement could be expected to be a cause of satisfaction, low achievement a cause of dissatisfaction.) The tables present the zero-order correlations between each of these conditions, on the one hand, and satisfaction and participation, on the other.

The data suggest that neither the satisfaction nor the dissatisfaction model is adequate to explain differential participation levels. Considering first the data for the black sample (Table 5), large school size is related to both low participation and dissatisfaction, as one would have expected, but the other variables do not work as well. Achievement seems to be salient as a cause of satisfaction (under conditions of high achievement) or dissatisfaction (under conditions of low achievement), but the effect on participation is not significant. Large school size, overcrowding, old buildings, and inexperienced teachers seem to be salient as conditions that produce dissatisfaction, but the effects of these variables on participation are neither persuasive nor even consistent. Participation is higher, for instance, in schools with newer facilities, and parents are more satisfied in newer schools. However, participation is also higher where schools are overcrowded, and parental dissatisfaction is higher in these schools.

TABLE 5

CORRELATIONS: SCHOOL INPUTS AND OUTPUTS SATISFACTION, AND PARTICIPATION BLACK SAMPLE (N=22)

P_1 = participation with regard to own child

P_2 = participation on schoolwide matters

	r with Satisfaction	r with P_1	r with P_2
1. Enrollment size	-.51*	-.24	-.50*
2. Class size	.03	-.04	.06
3. Utilization rate	-.39	.23	.00
4. Per pupil expenditure	-.13	.03	.15
5. Newness of school facilities	.52*	.41	.12
6. % of teachers with more than 3 years experience	.44*	.06	.18
7. School achievement:			
a) School effectiveness score	.38	.06	-.15
b) Reading achievement: cross-sectional score	.56**	.08	.25
c) Reading achievement: gain score	.44*	.15	-.07
d) % reading at/above grade level	.50*	.19	.43*
e) Arithmetic achievement: cross-sectional score	.35	-.10	.22

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.
**Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .01.

TABLE 6

CORRELATIONS: SCHOOL INPUTS AND OUTPUTS, SATISFACTION, AND PARTICIPATION WHITE SAMPLE (N=26)

P_1 = participation with regard to own child

P_2 = participation on schoolwide matters

	r with Satisfaction	r with P_1	r with P_2
1. Enrollment size	.23	-.16	.01
2. Class size	.10	-.04	-.05
3. Utilization rate	.14	.25	.28
4. Per pupil expenditure	-.23	.18	.26
5. Newness of school facilities	-.19	-.08	.00
6. % of teachers with more than 3 years experience	.06	.39*	.28
7. School achievement:			
a) School effectiveness score	.19	-.03	-.11
b) Reading achievement: cross-sectional score	.06	.38	.41*
c) Reading achievement: gain score	.27	.24	.19
d) % reading at/above grade level	.05	.32	.39*
e) Arithmetic achievement: cross-sectional score	-.01	.22	.23

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.
**Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .01.

Turning to the data for the white sample (Table 6), the various school conditions listed here are evidently not salient enough to white parents to be significant sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The correlations are not statistically significant, and most are trivial. If we exclude the achievement measures, the signs of almost all the correlations are the opposite of what we would reasonably expect. The more unsatisfying a condition should be, plausibly, the more satisfying it is in fact -- though clearly the correlations are too low to be of much consequence. For instance, the newer the school building, the more dissatisfied parents are. This being the case, the relationships of these conditions to participation levels would seem to be irrelevant. The signs of the correlations between satisfaction and the achievement measures are as expected -- the higher the achievement, the more satisfied the parents -- but the sizes of the correlations are not statistically significant and most tend to be trivial.

Clearly, then, the satisfaction and dissatisfaction models can be eliminated from further consideration in our effort to understand the determinants of school-to-school variability in parent participation levels.

Model 5: Participation as Explained by Parents' Backgrounds

If participation is in fact explained largely by parents' backgrounds, then, it would seem, the analogical argument and its assumptions about the determinants of participation and satisfaction would have to be dismissed as little more than an interesting theory with little relationship to reality. The SES-participation linkage, for instance, would have to be accepted as just that and not a finding that could be explained away by assumed covariation with critical situational variables. The situational variables on which proponents of the analogical argument rested their case would have to be accepted as either reducible to SES (as in the suburb vs. city "community scale" data), or as factors that have little observable impact (as in the case of the school openness data we have already

considered. And those who devise intervention strategies for raising participation levels in lower-SES communities would be well advised to target their efforts at affecting SES directly rather than altering situational variables that turn out to be of little consequence.

If the critical determinant of participation is parents' backgrounds, then the data should demonstrate at least three things. Background measures should be strongly related to participation and should account for a substantial amount of variability in participation. No other set of variables should be strongly related to participation or account for a significant amount of variability once background is introduced as a control. And the strength of the relationships between participation and the various background measures should not be significantly affected when other variables are controlled.

Tables 7 and 8 present the zero-order correlations between participation and the various background measures for the black and the white samples respectively. Several of the correlations are statistically significant, some even at the .01 level or higher. A number of others are only slightly short of attaining significance at the .05 level. And the signs of all the nontrivial correlations are precisely as expected.

For instance, in both the black and the white samples, participation is greater in schools having families that are higher in income, occupational status, and educational attainment. Participation is especially higher where mothers are more active in social and political affairs in general. Participation is lower where there are high percentages of female-headed households and families receiving welfare assistance. In black schools, P_2 participation rates tend to be lower the higher the percentage of mothers who grew up in the South or especially in the Caribbean. In white schools, participation rates are depressed with higher percentages of mothers who are first generation immigrants from Europe, especially where

TABLE 7
CORRELATIONS: BACKGROUND MEASURES AND PARTICIPATION
BLACK SAMPLE (N=22)

P_1 = participation with regard to own child

P_2 = participation on schoolwide matters

	r with P_1	r with P_2
1. SES: Hollingshead two-factor index of social position (education and occupational status)	.20	.28
2. Family income	.41	.53*
3. Mothers' educational attainment	.23	.37
4. Fathers' educational attainment	.18	.31
5. % receiving welfare assistance	-.25	-.23
6. % female-headed households	-.35	-.43*
7. % working mothers	-.02	-.11
8. Ruralness of origins	-.15	-.20
9. % grew up in U.S. South	.07	-.17
10. % grew up in U.S. outside the South	.27	.49*
11. % grew up in Caribbean	-.36	-.24
12. % Protestant	.10	.46*
13. % Catholic	.12	-.14
14. Sociopolitical activism	.49*	.81**

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.
**Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .01.

TABLE 8

CORRELATIONS: BACKGROUND MEASURES AND PARTICIPATION
WHITE SAMPLE (N=26)

P_1 = participation with regard to own child

P_2 = participation on schoolwide matters

	r with P_1	r with P_2
1. SES: Hollingshead two-factor index of social position (education and occupational status)	.35	.51**
2. Family income	.35	.62**
3. Mothers' educational attainment	.38	.52**
4. Fathers' educational attainment	.40*	.50**
5. % receiving welfare assistance	-.10	-.23
6. % female-headed households	-.04	-.25
7. % working mothers	.24	.15
8. Ruralness of origins	.32	.16
9. % grew up in U.S. South	-.19	-.18
10. % grew up in U.S. outside of South	.17	.27
11. % grew up outside of U.S. or Caribbean	-.18	-.27
12. % Protestant	.00	.20
13. % Catholic	-.36	-.53**
14. % Jewish	.28	.33
15. % Western European origins	-.06	.11
16. % Irish Catholic origins	-.13	-.16
17. % Southern and Eastern European origins	-.24	-.39*
18. % Italian Catholic origins	-.29	-.35
19. Sociopolitical activism	.48*	.81**

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.
**Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .01.

there are high percentages of Catholic mothers (and especially mothers of Italian Catholic origins). Participation tends to be higher in white schools with higher percentages of Jewish parents.

Standardized regression equations were calculated to permit us to take into account the considerable amount of shared variance among these variables and to enable us to assess the relative importance of each of these factors as a determinant of participation. Separate regression equations were calculated for each of our two participation measures and each of our racial samples. Given the possibility that the sociopolitical activism measure might conceivably have suffered from some confounding with participation of the P_2 variety, we also calculated separate regressions with and without the sociopolitical activism measure.

Table 9 summarizes the percentages of variability in P_1 and P_2 explained by the various background measures that achieved statistical significance in the black and the white data. These various measures explain 23 to 33 percent of the variability in P_1 and 38 to 72 percent of the variability in P_2. Clearly, then, background variables explain far more variability in participation than any other set of variables we have considered.

But how much do these background measures contribute to an explanation of the variability in participation relative to other variables? For the black sample, our prior discussion of models 1 through 4 indicated that no other set of variables provides any significant explanation of participation. Therefore, for the black sample, school differentials in participation are explained entirely by background measures.

For the white sample, we found that school openness climate had a significant impact on participation, especially participation of the P_1 variety. What, then, are the relative contributions of openness climate and background measures for the

TABLE 9

SUMMARY OF REGRESSION RESULTS: % OF VARIABILITY IN PARTICIPATION MEASURES EXPLAINED BY BACKGROUND VARIABLES

		Black		White	
	Background Measure	% of Variability in P_1 Explained	% of Variability in P_2 Explained	% of Variability in P_1 Explained	% of Variability in P_2 Explained
With Sociopolitical Activism Included	Sociopolitical Activism	24%	66%	23%	66%
	% Grew up in U.S. Outside South	-	6%	-	-
	Total	24%	72%	23%	66%
Without Sociopolitical Activism	Family Income	17%	28%	-	38%
	% Grew up in Caribbean	15%	-	-	-
	% Protestant	-	23%	-	-
	% Catholic	-	-	13%	-
	Ruralness	-	-	14%	-
	Total	32%	51%	27%	38%

white sample? Regression equations produced different results for the two participation measures. In the case of P_1, openness climate is the most significant determinant and explains 32% of the variability in P_1. The only background variable to add any explanatory power is sociopolitical activism, adding another 12% of variability explained, bringing the total explained variability to 44%. In the case of P_2, openness climate loses statistical significance when background variables are controlled and background measures alone (specifically sociopolitical activism and family income) are significant. (If sociopolitical activism is included in the list of background variables, this factor alone explains 65% of the variability in P_2 and no other variable achieves statistical significance. If sociopolitical activism is excluded from the list of background variables, then family income is the one variable to attain statistical significance, explaining 38% of the variability in P_2.)

In summary, of all the variables we have been considering, background factors alone are in any way useful for explaining school-to-school variability in parent participation in black schools. In the white data, school openness climate appears to be a factor of some significance in accounting for differentials in participation of the P_1 type, but for participation of the P_2 type it again appears that the roots of participatory behavior must be traced to parents' backgrounds and not school policies or practices.

The conclusions suggested by these participation data cannot be particularly comforting to proponents of the analogical argument. If we accept these findings as valid, then they suggest that the analogy breaks down in practice. Openness climate, the one situational variable that accounts for some of the variability in participation among white schools, appears to have little impact in black schools. Openness climate functions as hypothesized only in white schools, and

even then only for participation of the P_1 variety. And even then, we cannot be certain that we have interpreted correctly the direction of the relationship. (We cannot be certain that openness climate causes participation. It is equally plausible to assume that higher levels of parent participation cause a more open climate -- i.e., that the participation places pressures on school personnel to provide greater parent access and influence,and establishes a setting in which an active parent role is assumed by both parents and school personnel as the norm and therefore what is "appropriate." We shall return to this point and its troublesome implications later in our discussion.)

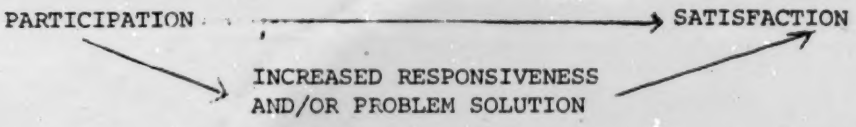
But even if we had found that it was possible to increase participation in low-income black communities by altering school openness arrangements and/or openness climate, is there any reason to believe that the effects of this greater participation would include significantly greater satisfaction with the schools? We turn now to our analysis of the data on satisfaction.

THE FINDINGS ON SATISFACTION

One of the assumptions made by proponents of participatory reforms was that broader participation in institutional functioning would make institutions more satisfying to their clients. But just how this would happen, if it would happen at all, became a subject of dispute. Since few of the participatory reforms of the '60s produced substantive changes in institutional governance and functioning, radical critics were inclined to interpret these reforms as pseudoparticipation. They charged that such reforms were illusory, providing the forms of participation without the substance, i.e., the power to affect decision outcomes. They argued that for genuine participation to exist, participants had to be given the power to affect policies and thereby increase institutional responsiveness and remedy the problems that were the sources of dissatisfaction. In contrast, they contended,

the participatory reforms of the '60s were oriented toward "safety valve" purposes -- i.e., "cooling out" dissatisfaction, coopting potential critics, turning attention away from the underlying problems that were the sources of dissatisfaction, and leaving relatively unaffected the real power structure in institutional governance and the pattern of decisions produced.

The advocates of community control (and of school system decentralization when it included extensive community participation) tended to be among the radical critics of the schools, concerned with providing substantive rather than pseudoparticipation for parents and community spokesmen. They assumed that the participatory reforms they proposed would have a substantial effect on institutional responsiveness. Increased parent satisfaction was one of the predicted outcomes at the end of a long chain of institutional changes and resultant effects on students,[8] all in the direction of alleviating the problems that were the sources of parental dissatisfaction. The increased satisfaction was expected to result largely from the impact of this intermediate chain of effects, and only in small measure from the act of participation itself. It would have been interesting to conduct a study that could have produced estimates of the relative contribution to satisfaction of, on the one hand, participation itself, and, on the other hand, the increased institutional responsiveness and/or remedying of problems resulting from the participation -- in terms of the sketch below, the direct and indirect effects of participation.



In a sense, the indirect path can be considered a representation of the position advocated by radical critics, whereas the direct path can be thought of as representing the assumptions made by those who instituted pseudoparticipation.

Since our research did not include measures of institutional responsiveness, we were concerned that it would be open to criticism as oriented toward pseudo-participation, or at the very least that our findings could be used to further encourage adherents of pseudoparticipation. For instance, the possible finding that school openness is related to higher levels of parent satisfaction, without information about the manner in which openness is related to institutional responsiveness or problem solution, could conceivably be interpreted to mean that changes in school openness in and of themselves will significantly increase satisfaction, "cool out" dissatisfaction, and permit school personnel to ignore the real sources of dissatisfaction. There is always the possibility that policy research findings will be applied to purposes neither intended nor desired by the researchers themselves, and certainly we neither intended nor desired to design research that would support this position.

In the hope of avoiding or at least minimizing the problem, our analysis was designed to take into account the argument of the radical critics. The serious conceptual, normative, and methodological weaknesses that plague research on responsiveness persuaded us against attempting to measure this variable directly. However, we attempted to deal with it indirectly. We included measures of the school inputs and outputs that we assumed to be the root causes of much parental satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the schools their children attend. We expected the analysis to suggest the proportion of variance in parental satisfaction/dissatisfaction explained by these variables. If we found that a large proportion of the variance in parental dissatisfaction, for instance, was explained by these variables, we would interpret this to mean that dissatisfaction is high where these inputs and outputs are not responsive to parents' wishes, and problems remain unsolved. Our analysis was also expected to suggest how much of the variance in satisfaction/dissatisfaction was explained by school openness, openness climate,

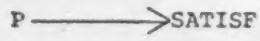
and/or racial congruence and whether the effect of these latter variables is in fact to decrease dissatisfaction. Therefore, we hoped to be in a position to estimate how much dissatisfaction might be expected to be "cooled out" by these policies relative to how much total dissatisfaction was attributable to these various inputs and outputs -- and therefore how much effort needs to be put into improvements targetted directly at these problems.

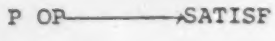
Of course, we might find that neither the reformers nor their radical critics correctly assessed the situation, and the sources of parents' satisfaction and dissatisfaction may be more complex than any of these analysts had theorized. To what extent is parental satisfaction with school quality explained by such variables as school openness arrangements, openness climate, perceived openness, racial congruence, and parent participation -- variables derived from the analogical argument? To what extent is such satisfaction or dissatisfaction traceable largely to parent background characteristics? To what extent is the true source of parent satisfaction/dissatisfaction the various inputs the school system allocates differently among schools -- e.g., new facilities, more experienced teachers, or higher per pupil expenditures? To what extent is satisfaction/dissatisfaction largely a reflection of school achievement levels? We consider the data on these questions in the sections that follow.

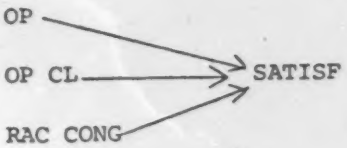
Model 1: Satisfaction as Determined by School Openness, Openness Climate, Perceived Openness, Racial Congruence, and Participation

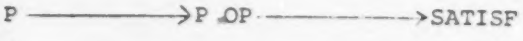
Implicit in the analogical argument are a number of possible models to explain school-to-school variability in satisfaction levels. Satisfaction was one of the outcomes expected from both participation itself and from the variables expected to stimulate participation (i.e., school openness, openness climate, perceived openness, and racial congruence). Even if we restrict out thinking to these variables alone, it is possible to hypothesize a large number of alternative plausible models of the causal processes underlying satisfaction with school quality. Some

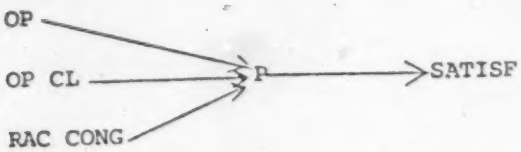
of these are depicted schematically below.

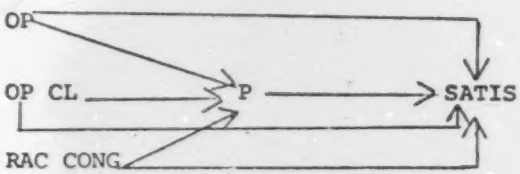


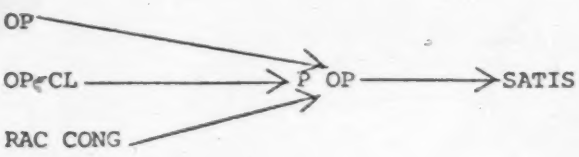


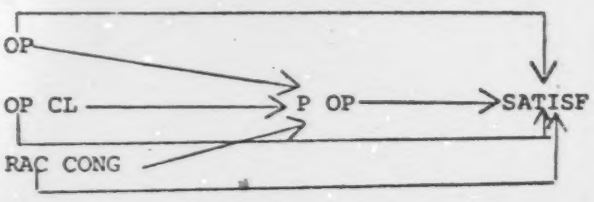


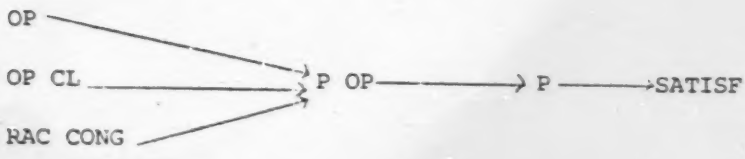


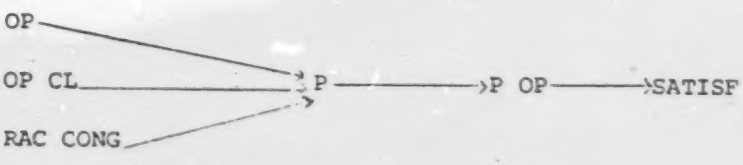


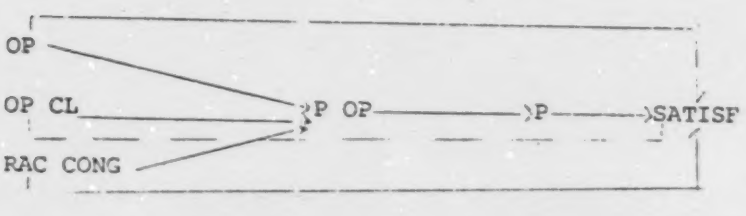












We will not describe here the complex analysis pursued in exploring these models. The reader is referred to the full report for these details. Some of the relevant data is presented in Tables 10, 11, 1 and 2. The apparent lack of relationship between our measures of participation and satisfaction enabled us to eliminate many of these theoretically plausible causal models. Other models were eliminated after noting the weak relationships between the perceived and actual openness and openness climate measures.

As in the participation analyses, there are rather different patterns of findings in the black and the white data. School openness and openness climate are apparently salient and of some consequence for our white sample -- as determinants of satisfaction as well as participation. However, in the black data there is virtually no relationship between these things that schools do and parents' satisfaction with school quality (just as we saw previously that there was virtually no relationship in the black data between these variables and parent participation). Racial congruence, though, a variable we have described as akin to school openness, does appear to be a significant determinant of satisfaction (as earlier we noted it had a small effect on participation).

But how significant? In fact, the data indicate a substantial amount of the school-to-school variability in satisfaction is accounted for by these measures. In the black sample, racial congruence alone explains 22% of the variability in satisfaction. In the white sample, openness and openness climate together account for 30% of the variability in satisfaction, but openness climate falls short of statistical significance. Openness alone accounts for 21% of the variability in satisfaction and is statistically significant. (It is noteworthy that openness turns out to be more significant than openness climate in explaining satisfaction while the reverse was true for the impact on participation. In the participation data, openness climate was significant while openness was not.)

TABLE 10

CORRELATIONS: SATISFACTION AND OPENNESS, OPENNESS CLIMATE, RACIAL CONGRUENCE, PERCEIVED OPENNESS, AND PARTICIPATION BLACK SAMPLE (N=22)

	r with Satisfaction
1. Openness[a]	-.03
2. Openness climate[a]	.13
3. Racial congruence[a]	.47*
4. Perceived openness	.39
5. Perceived access:	
a) Easy for parent to see principal	.38
b) Easy for parent to see teacher	.09
c) Easy for community leaders to see principal	.16
d) Good amount of parent contact with the school	-.10
6. Perceived information:	
Principal and teachers try to keep parents and community informed	.15
7. Perceived influence:	
a) Principal would rethink decision (if parents complained about something)	.33
b) Expect to be successful in getting principal to change harmful/unjust decision	.08
c) Too much or right amount of community influence on the school	.55**
d) Perceive parent influence on the school	.54**
e) Parents should have less influence than they do have	-.45*
8. Perceived interest representation:	
a) Parents and teachers try to foresee problems so that complaints are unnecessary	.36
b) PA officers adequately express her views	.31
9. Participation with regard to own child	.20
10. Participation on schoolwide matters	.15

[a] N=21.

*Probability of a correlation this size occuring by chance is less than .05.

**Probability of a correlation this size occuring by chance is less than .01.

TABLE 11
CORRELATIONS: SATISFACTION AND OPENNESS, OPENNESS CLIMATE, PERCEIVED OPENNESS, AND PARTICIPATION
WHITE SAMPLE (N=26)

	r with Satisfaction
1. Openness	.46*
2. Openness climate	.41*
3. Perceived openness	.55**
4. Perceived access:	
a) Parents can see principal	.29
b) Parents can see teacher	.23
c) Community leader can see principal	.24
d) Good amount of parent contact with the school	.41*
5. Perceived information:	
Principal and teachers try to keep parents and community informed	.37
6. Perceived influence:	
a) Principal would rethink decision (if parents complained about something)	.50**
b) Parent expects to be successful in getting principal to change harmful/unjust decision	.44*
c) Too much community influence on the school	.19
d) Perceive parent influence on the school	.40*
e) Parents should have less influence than they do have	-.31
7. Perceived interest representation:	
a) Parents and teachers try to foresee problems so that complaints are unnecessary	.45*
b) PA officers adequately express her views	.50**
8. Participation with regard to own child	-.01
9. Participation on schoolwide matters	-.10

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.

**Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .01.

The perceived openness measures are not related to other variables derived from the analogical argument in the manner hypothesized, and it is therefore not entirely clear how to interpret the data here. At any rate, several of these measures do provide additional explanatory power: in the white data, use of perceived openness measures as well as openness increases the amount of explained variance in satisfaction from 21% to as much as 45%; in the black data, adding perceived openness measures to racial congruence as predictors increases the explained variance from 22% to as much as 49%.

Is this model, then, a valid representation of the causal processes underlying satisfaction with school quality? Is it reasonable to interpret these findings to mean that parental dissatisfaction can be "cooled out" by openness arrangements in white schools or racial congruence in black schools? Before we reach any conclusions about this, we should consider the data on the various other plausible models of the determinants of satisfaction.

Model 2: Satisfaction as Determined by Parents' Backgrounds

Tables 12 and 13 present the zero-order correlations between the parent background variables and satisfaction with school quality. Little comment seems necessary on these tables. The correlations tend to be too low to be significant, and model 2 can be readily dismissed.

Model 3: Satisfaction as Determined by School System Inputs

We collected data on six school system inputs we anticipated might be related to parental satisfaction with school quality. We assumed that satisfaction would be greater in schools that were smaller in enrollment, were not overcrowded, had newer facilities, smaller classes, higher per pupil expenditures, and more experienced teachers. Table 14 presents the relevant zero-order correlations.

Examination of the data suggests that these various school system inputs affect parental satisfaction differently in the two racial samples. In the white sample,

TABLE 12
CORRELATIONS: SATISFACTION AND BACKGROUND VARIABLES
BLACK SAMPLE (N=22)

		r with Satisfaction
1.	SES: Hollingshead two-factor index of social position (education and occupational status)	-.15
2.	Family income	.07
3.	Mothers' educational attainment	-.03
4.	Fathers' educational attainment	-.15
5.	% receiving welfare assistance	.12
6.	% female-headed households	.06
7.	% working mothers	-.04
8.	Ruralness of origins	.12
9.	% grew up in U.S. South	.42
10.	% grew up in U.S. outside the South	-.26
11.	% grew up in Caribbean	-.29
12.	% Protestant	.32
13.	% Catholic	-.46*
14.	Sociopolitical activism	.20

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.

TABLE 13

CORRELATIONS: SATISFACTION AND BACKGROUND VARIABLES
WHITE SAMPLE (N=26)

		r with Satisfaction
1.	SES: Hollingshead two-factor index of social position (education and occupational status)	-.05
2.	Family income	-.11
3.	Mothers' educational attainment	-.04
4.	Fathers' educational attainment	.00
5.	% receiving welfare assistance	.01
6.	% female-headed households	.10
7.	% working mothers	.00
8.	Ruralness of origins	.32
9.	% grew up in U.S. South	-.06
10.	% grew up in U.S. outside of South	.31
11.	% grew up outside of U.S. or Caribbean	-.22
12.	% Protestant	.24
13.	% Catholic	.12
14.	% Jewish	-.32
15.	% Western European origins	.31
16.	% Irish Catholic origins	.33
17.	% Southern and Eastern European origins	.06
18.	% Italian Catholic origins	-.02
19.	Sociopolitical activism	-.15

TABLE 14

CORRELATIONS: SATISFACTION AND SCHOOL SYSTEM INPUTS

	BLACK SCHOOLS[a]	WHITE SCHOOLS[b]
1. Enrollment size	-.51*	.23
2. Class size	.03	.10
3. Utilization rate	-.39	.14
4. Per pupil expenditure	-.13	-.23
5. Newness of school facilities	.52*	-.19
6. Percentage of teachers with more than 3 years of teaching experience	.44*	.06

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.

[a] N=22
[b] N=26

the correlations tend to be opposite in sign from what was predicted, and none of the correlations is statistically significant. It would seem, then, that these various school system inputs are not particularly salient to white parents as causes of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with school quality. In the black data, the nontrivial correlations tend to have the predicted signs and several are statistically significant.

To arrive at an estimate of how much of the variability in satisfaction is explained by these interrelated input measures individually and together, we calculated a regression equation for the black data, using parental satisfaction with school quality as the dependent variable and the school input measures as the independent variables. The results are summarized in Table 15.

The data reveal that these input variables explain an astonishingly high percentage of the variability in school-to-school variability in satisfaction. The four inputs with statistically significant beta weights account for 76% of the variability in the satisfaction measure.

These school system inputs would seem to be of considerable salience to black parents as sources of their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with school quality. Why, then, are they of so little concern to white parents? The answer is probably to be found in the differences in the way these inputs are distributed between black and white schools. Our data indicate that the black schools are generally larger, older, and more overcrowded, and have fewer experienced teachers.[9] These input variables are not salient to white parents because they are not problematic to white parents. For instance, the most heavily utilized white school in our sample had a utilization rate of only 100% (i.e., no overcrowding at all). In the black sample, by way of contrast, 7 of the 22 schools (32%) had utilization rates of more than 100%. As a second illustration, no white school in our sample had a corps of experienced teachers that made up less than half its

TABLE 15

REGRESSION RESULTS: SCHOOL SYSTEM INPUTS
AS DETERMINANTS OF SATISFACTION
BLACK SAMPLE (N=22)

System Input	Zero-Order r with Satisfaction	Beta	St.Error	F	R^2	R^2 Change
Building newness	.52	.51	.01	15.8	.27	.27
Utilization rate	-.39	-.60	.00	14.2	.54	.27
Per pupil expenditure	-.13	-.48	.00	9.7	.65	.11
Enrollment size	-.51	-.39	.00	7.7	.76	.11
% teachers with more than 3 years experience	-.44	-.16	.00	1.2	.78	.02

teaching staff. But in 9 of the 22 black schools (41%), fewer than half the teachers had more than three years of teaching experience. We can conclude, then, that school system inputs are salient and significant in causing parental dissatisfaction where there is sound reason for dissatisfaction.

Model 4: Satisfaction as Determined by School Outputs

One would imagine that if anything affected parents' satisfaction with school quality, it would be school achievement levels. We assumed that satisfaction would be greater in schools where achievement levels were higher, and that dissatisfaction would be greatest where achievement was considerably below test norms. The relevant zero-order correlations are presented in Table 16.

Examination of the data reveals that this is only partially correct. The findings on the impact of outputs parrallel those we have just considered on inputs. The impact of these variables is clearly greater in the black data. In both samples, the higher the achievement levels, the greater the satisfaction. But in the black sample, all the correlations tend to be either statistically significant or not very far from achieving significance, while in the white sample most are trivial and none achieve statistical significance.

The reason for the racial differences in these data is probably the same as the explanation we offered earlier for the differing salience of school inputs. These variables are not salient to white parents because they are not problematic and can therefore be taken for granted or ignored more easily. Our data indicate that the average white school is achieving above test norms; the average black school, below test norms. The average gain in a three-year period in white schools is 3.3 years; in black schools, the mean gain in a three-year period is 2.4 years in reading achievement. The average percentage of students reading at or above grade level is 61% in the white schools, 30.2% in the black schools.[10]

TABLE 16

CORRELATIONS: SATISFACTION AND SCHOOL OUTPUTS

	BLACK SCHOOLS[a]	WHITE SCHOOLS[b]
1. School effectiveness score	.38	.19
2. Reading achievement: cross-sectional score	.56**	.06
3. Reading achievement: gain score	.44*	.27
4. Percentage of children reading at/above grade level	.50*	.05
5. Arithmetic achievement: cross-sectional score	.35	-.01

*Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .05.
**Probability of a correlation this size occurring by chance is less than .01.
[a]N=22
[b]N=26

But how significant are school inputs and outputs as determinants of satisfaction in the black schools relative to each other and to all the other sets of variables we considered? The results of the relevant regressions are summarized in Table 17. The table suggests several interesting findings. First and probably most important, the single factor that explains the greatest amount of variance in satisfaction is school reading achievement levels, as indicated by our cross-sectional score. The "cooling out" approach assumes that school openness to parent access and influence will reassure parents that school personnel are doing everything possible to try to remedy the problem, and this reassurance is expected to decrease some of the dissatisfaction. But given the substantial proportion of variance in parental dissatisfaction tied to achievement levels, there would seem to be reason to question whether any "cooling out" that might occur would be significant enough to make much difference.

This seems confirmed by a second finding apparent from the data. Openness-related measures, even when given the most generous interpretation, explain far less variability in satisfaction than any other category of measures.

Racial congruence fares better as a significant determinant of satisfaction, though still not as significant as school achievement levels. The beta and F levels for this variable are among the highest of all the variables we have been considering. Even after school achievement levels have been taken into account, racial congruence contributes an additional 18% of the explained variability in parental satisfaction. It would seem reasonable to conclude that if the "cooling out" assumption has any validity at all, it applies in schools where the staff and parent/student clientele are racially congruent. Perhaps parents are willing to believe that the school is doing everything possible to help underachieving students only where there is substantial racial congruence.

A third important finding indicated by these data involves the significance

TABLE 17
REGRESSION RESULTS: DETERMINANTS OF SATISFACTION
BLACK SAMPLE (N=21)

	Equation		Variables		
	R^2	R^2 Changes	Beta	Standard Error	F
With all variables entered:					
1. Reading achievement: cross-sectional score	.31	.31	.18	.02	3.9
2. % Catholic	.51	.20	.08	.00	0.6
3. Building newness	.65	.14	.12	.01	1.2
4. Utilization rate	.77	.12	-.71	.00	38.6
5. Perceived parent influence	.81	.04	-.16	.07	3.4
6. Per pupil expenditure	.83	.02	-.76	.00	24.6
7. Racial congruence	.93	.10	.58	.01	20.2
8. Enrollment size	.94	.01	-.14	.00	1.8
Recalculated excluding above variables with $F < 3.9$:					
1. Reading achievement: cross-sectional score	.31	.31	.31	.02	11.1
2. Racial congruence	.49	.18	.69	.01	45.0
3. Utilization rate	.60	.11	-.72	.00	46.3
4. Per pupil expenditure	.89	.29	-.82	.00	41.1

of school inputs. Even when other significant variables are entered into the regression equation, two inputs (utilization rate and per pupil expenditure) explain an additional 40% of the variance after the variability explained by reading achievement levels and racial congruence have been taken into account.

These findings are rather different from the results obtained from analysis of the white data. For the white schools, neither inputs nor outputs are significantly related to varying levels of satisfaction. The few variables that do appear to be significantly related to school-to-school differences in satisfaction are variables derived from the analogical argument -- school openness and perceived openness measures. Separate regressions were calculated for school openness and each perceived oenness measure that was significantly correlated with satisfaction. The results are summarized in Table 18. These variables account for 31 to 45% of the school-to-school variability in parental satisfaction, depending on which perceived openness measure is used in the calculation. Clearly, then, a substantial amount of the variability in satisfaction is explained by school openness and perceived openness, with satisfaction significantly higher in schools that are more open to their constituencies and are perceived to be open. Therefore, it would seem that the assumptions underlying the analogical argument hold up better for the white school settings from which they were derived than for the black school settings whose problems prompted their formulation and translation into reform proposals.

Why does the analogy break down when applied to the black data? Is it simply that the determinants of school-to-school variability in participation and satisfaction are different in black and white settings, and therefore it is unwise to base reform thinking on analogical reasoning? Or is the analogy sound but unsupportable without creating at least an experimental version of the future reality it was meant to describe -- e.g., a future reality in which school openness and

TABLE 18
REGRESSION RESULTS: DETERMINANTS OF SATISFACTION
WHITE SAMPLE (N=26)

Variable entered in step 1	% of variance in satisfaction explained	Variable entered in step 2	% of additional variance in satisfaction explained	Total variance in satisfaction explained
Perceived openness index	30%	School openness	15%	45%
School openness	21%	Good amount of parent contact with the school	12%	33%
Principal would rethink decision if parents complained	25%	School openness	19%	44%
School openness	21%	Expect success in getting principal to change decision	10%	31%
School openness	21%	Parents and teachers try to foresee problems	17%	38%

openness climate in black schools is considerably greater than now? This latter question brings us full circle to the methodological concern we considered at the outset of this analysis -- how useful are nonexperimental data for policy guidance?

CAUSAL MODELS AND CROSS-SECTIONAL, NONEXPERIMENTAL DATA -- HOW USEFUL FOR POLICY GUIDANCE?

Nonexperimental data have several inherent limitations for use in policy formation. First, naturalistic data are ideally suited to answering questions about the way things are, but less helpful for dealing with questions about why they are that way, or what outcomes might be expected if a significant policy variable were altered. They are,to a substantial degree,time- and place-bound.

Second, in cross-sectional data, where all measurements are taken at one point in time, we have no way of knowing for certain what the proper time-ordering of the variables should be -- i.e., which, if any, precede(s) and cause the others. Elaboration of the relationships through data analytic techniques may increase the plausibility of a given interpretation but there is no way to prove this interpretation, and conclusions from these analyses are vulnerable to attack. Whatever interpretation is given,it is likely that other, equally plausible interpretations are possible.

Third, nonexperimental data suffer from the confounding of variables in social reality and the absence of certain combinations of traits important to questions about "the way things might be." In the absence of data from black schools characterized by, for instance, high achievement and affluent and highly educated families, can we really make valid predictions about what impact might be expected from a given policy change in black schools in some future reality? Attempts to compensate for lack of adequate control for background variables in the research design by statistical controls in the analytic phase do not solve the problem. What can be accomplished in these analyses is limited by the data

to be analyzed. And these data reflect only the range of variability in "the way things are," which is likely to be considerably narrower than the range of variability in "the way things might be."

In policy research, the key question is estimating how a change in a policy variable will affect the outcome variable(s) of interest. But with nonexperimental data, we are limited to data about how the policy and outcome variables are related now. In quantitative terms, we are limited to the range of variability in these measures now. In qualitative terms, we are limited to data about the present forms of a given policy such as school openness. Yet we are using these data to make judgments about effects the policy might have in a future reality where the variable might exist in new forms that might make a significant difference in its salience and effectiveness.

We cannot expect a variable to have a discernible impact when it is limited in variability. If the scores were better distributed, as would likely be the case in a policy experiment, then there would be more of a chance for the impact to be detected. These analyses, then, will be vulnerable to attack with the argument that the findings might have been different in a policy experiment or in actual implementation of the proposed policy change.

The radical reformers who demanded and fought for school system decentralization and community control envisioned a series of changes and effects that would transform social and political reality in fundamental ways. The change process they hoped to set in motion would affect power and influence, institutional functioning, and institutional outputs. Is it possible, then, to learn anything about the validity of these assumptions without establishing the kinds of changes assumed by the reformers and closely monitoring and evaluating the consequences? We had hoped when we began this investigation that the answer to this question would be in the affirmative -- i.e., that we could establish at

least gross approximations to the potential effects to be expected in such policy experiments by using cross-sectional non-experimental data. These data would reflect the naturally-occurring variability in such key variables as school openness, openness climate, and parent participation, and we had expected the naturally-occurring range to be considerable. The sample included schools with reputations for close working relationships with their communities. The sample even included two schools that had been part of an experimental community control demonstration district. We had assumed, then, that we might be able to use these data to approximate the various "treatment levels" that would have been created in a policy experiment.

However, the range of variability in our measures of school openness and openness climate is considerably narrower than the theoretical range for these variables. And too, it must be acknowledged, school openness and openness climate themselves are considerably narrower in scope than the fundamental transformation of school-community power relations envisioned by the reformers. Although greater openness to community access and influence is at the core of much of what the reformers were demanding, they were in fact also demanding considerably more -- and the changes included in that more are probably more central to what the reformers had in mind. The problem is more than simply quantitative -- it is not only the statistical range in a quantitative sense that we failed to approach but the range in a qualitative sense as well. Our openness measure tapped relatively conventional forms of school-community relations -- probably because this was all that existed in our sample but also perhaps because of measurement weaknesses. Yet the forms of school-community interaction envisioned by the reformers were radically different from virtually anything in the existing range. Are data gathered about the present forms of school openness useful for estimating future impact under future conditions when school openness is expected to exist in new forms?

When the research design for this study was under discussion originally, it had been proposed that openness be used as a criterion in sample selection -- i.e., that the sample be stratified on levels of openness as well as race and SES. That suggestion was rejected at the time because it would have required an even larger study to analyze and rate the openness arrangements of all the schools in the potential sample pool. We believed the variability we would find in our sample would be sufficient for our purposes. However, it would seem that we were wrong. Had we done the prior investigation and determined what the existing forms and range of variability in openness were, we would not, in all likelihood have done the study described here.

Still, as open to challenge as our findings are on methodological grounds -- as least as the basis for policy recommendations -- there is something intuitively sensible about what they suggest. Therefore, they strike us as both relevant and probably valid if interpreted with care and used properly. Even if the particular changes assumed by proponents of community control were implemented, the impact on the average parent would probably be little different from the pattern suggested by our data. Where low achievement levels, overcrowding, and the like are serious sources of dissatisfaction, the ease or difficulty one has in securing access to school personnel is not likely to be seen as a matter of great consequence relative to remedying these problems themselves. In such a context, it seems unreasonable to expect a changing of the guard in the people filling leadership roles to have more than a fleeting impact on that dissatisfaction. The strongest support in our data for the notion that the changing of the guard is important is to be found in the data on racial congruence. Clearly, the presence of significant numbers of black professionals does generate positive affect toward the school and perhaps "cools out" some dissatisfaction. But any "cooling out" that does occur is not sufficient to overcome the high levels of dissatisfaction rooted in school functioning itself as manifested in levels of inputs and outputs.

This is precisely what should be expected if you view parents as intelligent and reasonable, attuned to their own interests, and not easy dupes for demagogic leadership. But there was little in the literature on the controversies to suggest this outcome, and much to suggest rather different results. Therefore, perhaps these findings are useful for placing this view of the average parent at center stage.

But where does this leave our understanding of the average parent in white schools? Are white parents less concerned about achievement levels, overcrowding, and the like? We would not like to leave the impression that our data should be interpreted this way. It must be emphasized that our analysis was conducted on the aggregate level only. Therefore, what mattered in explaining relationships was school-to-school differences in the variables investigated. And white schools were not different enough from one another for these inputs or outputs to be salient on a school-to-school basis. Inputs and outputs were distributed over a range in white schools, but generally all fell within the satisfactory dimension of the range -- i.e., they differed only in degrees of "goodness." Openness arrangements, however, were problematic, with parents in some schools finding it difficult to get sufficient information to answer their questions, or sufficient access to register complaints when they felt they had a grievance. Therefore, the position of parents in white schools was as reasonable given their concerns as the position of parents in black schools given theirs.

It seems painfully clear to this researcher, after conducting the analysis reported here, that cross-sectional data do not provide an adequate alternative to policy experiments to provide the kind of information policymakers need. This does not mean that survey data cannot yield useful insights and shed light on existing relationships. We think this analysis has had a significant yield in these terms. But the policymaker's needs are for a kind of information that is

likely to be forthcoming only from carefully designed and rigorously evaluated policy experiments. The policymaker needs estimates of what is to be expected from a policy proposal implemented in precisely the same way as he might implement it in the future. And he needs reasonable proof of causal realtionships, the kind of clear time-ordering of variables produced only by longitudinal rather than cross-sectional data.

Nonexperimental data are useful for establishing the form of relationships at a given point in time, and for building causal models that can then be tested with experimental approaches. If gathered at several points in time and analyzed through quasi-experimental technqies, these data can even be used to test some of these models where the opportunities present themselves for natural experiments.

But use of nonexperimental data as a short-cut substitute for social experimentation would seem to have limited payoff. The political and methodological problems of conducting policy experiments will have to be confronted head on and overcome if educational policy research is to mature as a field and function in a significant way to assist policymakers in choosing and implementing effective policy options.

NOTES

1. This slogan was voiced frequently by community control advocates during the school controversies in New York City. It was the headline used in a full-page Urban Coalition advertisement in The New York Times during the Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy in the fall of 1968.

2. For my understanding of the analogical argument, I am indebted to David K. Cohen of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and to David K. Cohen and Marshall S. Smith, Parents, Power and the Schools: Decentralization in the Cities (Unpublished manuscript, Cambridge: Center for Educational Policy Research, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1972).

3. See Harriet Kern Spivak, School Openness, Parent Participation, and Satisfaction: An Exploration of Causal Models (Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1975), Chapter I. For a more elaborated review of this literature, see Harriet Spivak, School Decentralization and Community Control: Policy in Search of a Research Agenda (Unpublished qualifying paper, Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1973), Revised version of part of a report submitted to the National Institute of Education under the title School Decentralization and Community Control: Policy in Search of a Research Agenda - Final Report: The School Legitimacy Study (New York: Center for Urban Education, 1973), to be processed for ERIC acquisition in 1975.

4. The Center for Urban Education was a regional laboratory in the national network of R & D laboratories funded by the U.S. Office of Education and subsequently the National Institute of Education. The Center went out of existence in 1973. Throughout most of its history, this study was referred to as the School Legitimacy Study. For a short time, its name was changed to the School Attitudes Study. The latter was the name used at the time CUE submitted its interim report to the Office of Education. See Harriet Spivak, Rita Senf, and Morton Inger, The School Attitudes Study: An Interim Report (New York: Center for Urban Education, 1970). For the final report, see Final Report: School Legitimacy Study, op. cit.

5. The larger CUE study also included a sample of 16 predominantly Puerto Rican schools. However, these schools were reported from the data reported here because we had complete data on only 14 schools and the N was too small for the kind of analysis we were attempting.

6. We opted for using schools rather than individuals as the unit of analysis because we felt it would be more productive of policy-relevant findings. If we had conducted the analyses on the individual (parent) level, our findings might have suggested some interesting things about how parents' backgrounds and perceptions affect their behavior and attitudes toward the schools. But such findings would provide no handles for action. Using schools as the unit of analysis, it was hoped that our findings would suggest how differences in variables amenable to policy control (e.g., school openness policies) affect such outcomes as participation and satisfaction, and such findings might be used to suggest changes in policy.

7. Spivak, School Openness, Parent Participation, and Satisfaction, op. cit.

8. Spivak, School Decentralization and Community Control, op. cit., Chapter II.

9. Spivak, School Openness, Parent Participation, and Satisfaction, op. cit., pp. 129-133.

10. Ibid., p. 140, Table XVII.